

ROYSTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCILANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year

1949.

-----ooOoo-----

## PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS:

District Medical Officer of Health (and Divisional Medical  
Officer for North Herts. Area):

VICTOR R. WALKER, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., D.P.H.  
Divisional Health Office,  
12, Brand Street,  
Hitchin.  
(Telephone: Hitchin 107)

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor.

S. M. JACKSON, M.S.I.A., C.R.S.I.  
Town Hall,  
Royston.  
(Telephone: Royston 2393)

Council Offices,  
Town Hall,  
Royston.  
(Telephone: Royston 2393 and 2394)

J. SPENCER, D.P.A., A.C.C.S., Clerk of the Council.



ROYSTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

To the Chairman and Members of the Council.

Madam and Gentlemen,

In accordance with Ministry of Health Circular 2/50 I beg to submit my annual report for the year 1949.

Relative to the figures both for England and Wales and for the previous year, there is a markedly lower local birth and a higher local death rate. Such rates must be due to a local excess of persons above average age for the country as a whole. Applying to the local death rate the Comparability Figure of 0.82 supplied by the Registrar General a Standardised Death Rate of 12.7 is obtained.

From the body of such report there is no particular point I would bring to your special notice and I would only acknowledge the great assistance received from Mr. S.M. Jackson, your Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector, who is responsible for the sections on sanitary matters. I would also thank your council and its chief officers for every consideration and help during the year.

I am, madam and gentlemen,  
Your obedient servant,

VICTOR R. WALKER.

June 1950.

SECTION A.

LOCAL STATISTICS.

Area (in acres) . . . . .	1626
Civilian Population - Registrar-General's	
. . . Estimate for mid-1949	4,440
Number of inhabited houses at 1st. April, 1949	
. . . (estimated)	1,300
Rateable value (1st. April, 1949) . . . . .	£27,845
Sum represented by Penny Rate (est. 1949-50)	£109

Extracts from Vital Statistics for  
the year 1949.

	<u>Totals.</u>	M.	F.	Royston	Comparable
				U.D.	rates for
				Local	England
				Rates.	& Wales.
LIVE BIRTHS.	{ Legitimate	59	34	25	
	{ Illegitimate	-	-	-	
	{ All	59	34	25	

Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	13.3	16.7
---	------	------

	<u>Totals.</u>	M.	F.
STILLBIRTHS. (Legitimate	2	2	-
(Illegitimate	-	-	-
	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>

Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births 33 23

	<u>Totals</u>	M.	F.
DEATHS	69	38	31

Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population	15.5	11.7
---	------	------

## DEATH RATES OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE.

All infants per 1,000 live births	34	32
-----------------------------------	----	----

Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate  
births ... 34

Illegitimate infants per 1,000  
illegitimate births ... Nil

Actual number of deaths under 1 year

Legitimate	...	...	...	2
------------	-----	-----	-----	---

Illegitimate . . . .

Total	2
-------	---

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.....7.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)...	...	...	10
----------------------------------	-----	-----	----

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	1990	1991	1992
.....	.....	.....	.....

Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages). . . . .

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) -



## Comment on vital statistics for the year.

The estimated civilian population for mid 1949 shows an increase of 67 on the previous year.

The total of live births shows a considerable fall from 74 in the previous year to 59 and total deaths a considerable rise from 48 in the previous year to 69. Such are almost certainly due to a considerable loading of older age groups in the local population since there has been no unusual or excessive mortality.

## SECTION B. Provision of Health Services for the Area.

No important change took place during the year.

## SECTION C.

### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

#### Water Supply.

The whole of the district, with the exception of 7 houses at Eagle Tavern, is supplied with water from the chalk by the Royston Water Company, by a piped supply of excellent quality.

There are 5 houses at The Green which are supplied by means of a standpipe. All the other houses in the district are supplied from the water mains direct to the houses.

Bacteriological and chemical examinations were made during the year and analysis shows the water to be in a satisfactory chemical and bacteriological condition and suitable for drinking.

No shortage was experienced during the year.

#### Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.

Three new houses built by private enterprise, 2 police cottages and 22 new houses built by the Council were connected to the sewerage system during the year.

The scheme for long needed improvements at the Sewage Farm was proceeded with and an informal inquiry was held by a Ministry of Health Engineering Inspector. The Consulting Engineers, Messrs D. Balfour & Sons continued the preparation of the detailed plans and particulars to submit to the Ministry of Health and it was hoped that this much needed improvement would receive approval early in the new year.

## Refuse Removal and Disposal.

The first full year's working of the new motor refuse vehicle realised the improvements in the service which were anticipated.

The cost of refuse removal for the year amounted to £634-6-8.

The tip at Coombes Hole was maintained as well as available labour allowed. A sum was included in the amount necessary for improvements at the Sewage Farm to allow for bringing the tip into a satisfactory condition, but this work has to await the approval of the main scheme for the Sewage Farm.

Rat infestation on the tip and on the Sewage Farm was kept within reason by regular baiting and poisoning.

## Salvage.

The total amount of waste paper collected during the year again showed an increase over the previous year, amounting to 38 tons 18 cwts. and realising £215-18-3. With the increased collection allowance made by the Board of Trade, the total revenue from salvage amounted to £234-7-3.

The Council entered the National Waste Paper Contest promoted by the Waste Paper Recovery Association, and it is pleasing to record that a £50 prize was won.

In July the Directions and Instructions to Councils relating to the collection or preservation or disposal of waste paper were revoked, but the Council decided to continue the salvage scheme, and in spite of the lower prices obtainable, the decision appears to have been justified.

## Rodent Control.

In the middle of the year, a new Act came into operation, the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, and in anticipation of this, the Council, together with the Hitchin Rural and Wolwyn Rural Councils, formulated a joint scheme, to carry out the requirements of the Act. The scheme commenced on June 1st. 1949, the Senior Sanitary Inspector to the Hitchin Rural District Council undertaking the control. A full time operator was appointed and a light van provided for transport of equipment and materials. Local complaints or requests are passed to the Hitchin office, where the co-ordination of the work is arranged.



During the six months the scheme has been operative, the work done at Royston has occupied a total of  $183\frac{1}{2}$  man hours. Of these,  $14\frac{1}{4}$  hours have been spent dealing with control of rodents in sewers,  $55\frac{1}{2}$  hours on the refuse tip etc.,  $71\frac{1}{4}$  hours on private dwellings, 29 hours on business premises and  $13\frac{1}{2}$  hours on block inspection. In the three months September to December, 131 rats and mice were picked up following treatments.

The scheme has worked smoothly since its inception, for which, chief credit is due to Mr. S. T. Gunning, the Senior Sanitary Inspector to the Hitchin R. D. C.

The awareness of the public to the service is extending with a consequent increase in the work. A further period of working is required, however, before any final judgement can be made.

#### Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The details below show the number of inspections made during the year.

Defects under the Housing Acts	36
" " " Public Health Acts	152
" " " Factory Acts	12
Prevention of Infectious Diseases	6
Milk & Dairies Order	12
Food Shops & Stores	41
Bakeryhouse Inspections	10
Prevention of Nuisances	114
House Drainage	45
Supervision of Refuse Collection & Disposal	54
Supervision of Salvage	49
Rats & Mice Destruction	22
Smoke Observations	9
Caravans & Moveable Dwellings	8
Miscellaneous Inspections	98

Details resulting from the above inspections are as follows:

Houses in Clearance Areas to be demolished	6
Houses under Demolition Orders to be demolished	0
Houses demolished	1
Statutory Notices served	2
Informal Notices served	42
Notices complied with	44
House roofs renewed or repaired	31
House windows repaired	24

House chimneys repaired	10
House floors renewed or repaired	25
House ceilings " " "	35
House walls (external) repaired or plastered	16
House eaves gutters renewed or repaired	26
Internal wall plaster repaired	18
House drains relaid or repaired	6
New drains laid	35 yds.
Gullies fixed	4
Intercepting traps fixed	1
New sinks fixed	16
Sinks renewed or repaired	3
Sink waste pipes renewed or repaired	15
W.C. roofs repaired	4
W.C. pans renewed or repaired	12
W.C. cisterns renewed or repaired	43
New baths fixed	3
Inspection Chambers built	4
Inspection Chambers repaired	5
New vent shafts fixed	1
New F.A.I. fixed	1
Water service pipes repaired	4
Dampness remedied	14
Yards paved or repaired	2
Cooking ranges renewed or repaired	16
Hot water systems renewed or repaired	9
Staircases repaired	2
External doors repaired	6
Blocked drains cleared & cleansed	32
Accumulations of rubbish removed	19
Houses disinfected	8
Bakehouse floors cleansed	2
Bakehouse walls cleansed	4
Bakehouse ceilings repaired & cleansed	3
Dairies cleansed & limewashed	3
Sanitary conveniences at factories repaired	2
" " " " cleansed	2

#### New Streets & Buildings.

Total number of plans approved	46
Plans approved for new houses	14
" " " other buildings	30
" " " Change of User	2
New Houses completed:-	
By Local Authority under Housing Acts	22
By Police Authority	2
By Private Enterprise	3



Conversions & adaptations - Family Units	2
Other buildings completed	21
Drains laid to above	1498 yards.
Gullies laid to above	55
Connections to sewer	11
Vent Shafts fixed	28
Inspection Chambers built	44
Water closets fixed	48
Cesspools	1
Septic Tank Installations	1
Intercepting Traps fixed	10
Baths fixed	29
Lavatory basins fixed	31
Sinks fixed	50
Dustbins provided	28

#### SECTION D.

##### Housing.

The Post War Housing programme was continued during the year and 20 permanent brick houses on the Orchard Road Site and 2 on the Day's Close Site were completed. 14 of these were of three bedroom type, two of four bedroom type and two were one bedroomed bungalows, and four two bedroom type.

Three new dwellings were erected by private enterprise and also two Police Cottages.

Conversions and adaptations of existing buildings by private enterprise provided two family units.

At the end of the year the Housing List still stood at around the 120 figure for List A applicants, and although in all 84 houses have been built and occupied up to the end of 1949, the solution of the housing problem does not appear to be in sight.

The Council hold four premises under requisition and these provide 8 family units of accommodation.

##### Ex P.O.W. Camp, Therfield Heath.

At the end of 1948 the Council accepted responsibility for the huts on the above site in the area of the Hitchin Rural District where squatters had occupied a number of the huts. Considerable money was expended in making the occupied huts habitable and providing essentials.

The outer corrugated sheeting to all these huts are perished and the buildings have had their "life". Attempts to make the roofs watertight without the expenditure of a considerable sum of money cannot be successful and the conditions will deteriorate rapidly.

The Council's policy is to demolish the huts as and when the occupants are rehoused, but this process is inevitably a very slow one, and the continued occupation of these places under winter conditions can only be viewed with dismay.

#### Clearance Areas.

6 houses in Clearance Areas still remain to be demolished. One of these is still occupied. Every effort is being made to complete the demolitions and negotiations with the owners of the premises are in progress.

One house which was closed for human habitation has been demolished.

Informal action has been taken where essential repairs were necessary to render houses fit and satisfactory results have been obtained without recourse to formal action.

#### Control of Civil Building.

The Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor has continued to act as the officer responsible for the issue of Building Licences on behalf of the Minister of Works under Defence Regulation 56A.

During 1949, 3 licences to erect new dwelling houses were issued.

Three houses under licence were completed and occupied during the year.

One building was adapted to provide 2 units of family accommodation.

17 licences were issued for essential works and repairs to properties of a total estimated cost of £5,282.

Of these licences 14 were in respect of dwelling houses and 3 in respect of other buildings.



The works licensed included the provision of additional bedroom, enlargement of livingroom and new chimney stack, provision of bathroom, erection of boundary wall, erection of garages and the repair or renewal of roofs, eaves gutters and downpipes, drains, external walls, internal wall plaster, ceilings, chimney stacks, floors, cooking and heating apparatus, water closets, sinks, baths and lavatory basins, the repair and painting of external wood and ironwork, internal redecorations, installation of electric services and other essential works to bring property up to a reasonable standard of repair.

## SECTION E.

### Inspection and Supervision of Food.

#### Milk.

There are three milk producers in the district, one of whom is licensed by the County Council for the production of Tuberculin Tested Milk.

There are also 2 retail purveyors of milk in the district.

Inspections of the farms and dairies were made and samples of milk taken in accordance with the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations 1936/46 gave results which complied with the standard.

During the year, the new legislation came into force, under which the responsibility for the supervision of milk production was taken over by the Ministry of Agriculture, the local authority being responsible in respect of retail distribution.

#### Meat.

No slaughtering of animals is carried out in the district.

Meat in butchers shops and fish in fishmongers have been inspected and the following certified as unfit for human consumption.

Beef	52 lbs.
Pork	16 lbs.
Mutton	12 lbs.
Kippers	6 stone.
Whiting	3 stone.
Sea Bream	7 stone.

The causes of condemnation were Bone Taint, Bruising and Inflammation, Unset and Dropsical Condition and Decomposition.



### Other Foods.

Meat and other food shops were visited and the following foods were found to be unfit for human consumption on examination and were destroyed.

Bacon	28½ lbs.
Butter	26½ lbs.
Cheese	1 lb.
Eggs	21

### Tinned and Packetted Food.

Corned Beef (6 lb.tins)	12
do do (1 lb.tins)	5
M. & V. Ration	3
Minced Beef	4
Luncheon Meat	1
Potted Meat	4
Pork	2
Whalemeat Steak	1
Salmon	2
Hake	2
Herring Roes	3.
Fish Fillets	1
Fish Pastes	150
Pilchards	5
Evaporated Milk	35
Condensed Milk	27
Peanut Butter	1
Beans	9
Peas	8
Plums	2
Jam	3
Syrup	2
Grapes	3
Orange Juice	5
Pineapple	3
Marmalade	2
Dates	12
Beetroot	15
Pickles	( 6 x 1 gal.cans. 75 cases.
Piccalilli	5
Salad Cream	48
Pickled Walnuts	1
Spaghetti	4

### Food Poisoning Outbreaks.

No intimation of any occurrence of food poisoning was received during the year.

### Green Plunge Swimming Pool.

14 samples of water were taken from the above and analysis showed the pool to be suitable for bathing purposes.

### Factories Act 1937.

The following table gives the information required by the Ministry of Labour and National Service in accordance with Form 572.

1. Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health  
(including inspections made by Sanitary Inspector)

Premises.	Number of			
	No. in Register.	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Occupiers Prosecuted
I. Factories in which Secs. 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities.	8	4	2	-
II. Factories not included in (I) in which Sec. 7 is enforced by Local Authority	19	8	1	-
III. Other premises in which Sec. 7 is enforced by Local Authority. (excl. outworkers.	-	-	-	-
Total	27	12	3	-

2. Cases in which defects were found:-

Particulars	No of cases in which defects found.				
	Found.	Remedied.	To H.M. Inspector.	By H.M. Inspector.	No. of prosecutions.
Want of cleanliness	4	4	-	-	-
Overcrowding	Nil	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temp.	Nil	-	-	-	-
Inadequate vent.	Nil	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors	1	1	-	-	-
<u>Sanitary Conveniences</u>					
(a) Insufficient	1	1	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	2	2	-	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	Nil	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act	Nil	-	-	-	-
Total	8	8	-	-	-



SECTION F.

Prevalence of, and control over, infectious and other diseases.

Total notifications of infectious disease (after correction) were as follows:

Measles	35
Whooping Cough	27
Acute Pneumonia	1
Acute Anterior	
Poliomyelitis	1

The mild prevalence of measles and whooping cough was almost confined to the first quarter of the year. The single local case of poliomyelitis, occurring in a young adult in late spring, was of encephalitic type terminating fatally.

For another year no case of diphtheria was confirmed in the district and, despite its continued absence from the area, the offer of protection of infants by immunisation continued to be accepted by a large majority of parents.

# TUBERCULOSIS.

## New Cases and Deaths During the Year.

Age Periods.	New Cases				Deaths.			
	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 - 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 - 15	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
15 - 25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25 - 35	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
35 - 45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45 - 55	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
55 - 65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
and over	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	2	3	2	-	1	-	-	-

Compared with the low total of 1 for 1948, notifications show an increase, but the total for deaths from tuberculosis (all forms) was unchanged at 1.

VICTOR R. WALKER.

District Medical Officer of Health.